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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3696th meeting of the Security Council, held on 20 September 1996, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan of 13 September 1996 (S/1996/754).

"The Security Council expresses its concern at the deterioration of the situation in Tajikistan and at the increasing tension along the Tajik-Afghan border. It reaffirms its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Tajikistan and to the inviolability of its borders.

"The Security Council is also concerned about the violations of the Tehran cease-fire agreement of 17 September 1994 (S/1994/1102, annex I) and about the failure of both parties to implement the Ashgabat agreements. It is, in particular, concerned about the ongoing fighting in the Tavildara region and the seizure of the towns of Jirgatal and Tajikabad by the opposition. The Council demands the immediate cessation of all hostilities and acts of violence.

"The Security Council recalls the commitments made by the Government of Tajikistan and by the leadership of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) to resolve the conflict and to achieve national reconciliation through peaceful means. It regrets that these commitments have not so far been honoured.

"The Security Council commends the efforts of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) and urgently calls upon the parties to cooperate fully with UNMOT and to ensure the safety of the personnel of the United Nations and other international organizations and also calls on them to lift all restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNMOT personnel. In this connection it is concerned about the large-scale use of landmines due to the threat it creates for the population and UNMOT personnel.

"The Security Council welcomes the initiative of the Secretary-General to arrange for an inter-agency mission to Tajikistan to determine how to respond most effectively to the humanitarian situation.

"The Security Council welcomes the renewed work of the Joint Commission and the results of their efforts in reducing tensions in the Garm region and in the Karategin valley.

"The Security Council emphasizes that the primary responsibility rests with the Tajik parties themselves in resolving their differences. It recalls paragraphs 3 and 4 of its resolution 1061 (1996) of 14 June 1996.

"The Security Council commends the efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Representative and calls upon the parties to cooperate fully with him in resuming the inter-Tajik talks. The Council reiterates the importance of the continuation of direct political dialogue between the President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the leader of the UTO for the peace process and encourages them to hold their next meeting as soon as possible."